

Nevada School Garden Food Safety Guidelines

School gardens engage students by providing a dynamic environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. They are living laboratories where interdisciplinary lessons are drawn from real life experiences, encouraging students to become active participants in the learning process. School gardens have been shown to increase self-esteem, help students develop a sense of ownership and responsibility and promote healthy lifestyle choices, including increased fruit and vegetable consumption.



Potential food safety risks should be taken seriously. Produce grown in school gardens can be contaminated during growth, harvest, transportation, preparation or service and result in foodborne illness. When appropriate food safety precautions are taken, risks of foodborne illness and crop contamination are reduced. The following guidelines are intended to help those working in school gardens ensure proper precautions are followed throughout the gardening process to minimize the food safety risks.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) are effective food safety methods for reducing foodborne illness risks within school gardens and in commercial production. The basic principles for GAP/GHP are to prevent the introduction of pathogens into the garden and help garden leaders and students identify potential points of contamination when producing and harvesting garden produce.



This handbook provides an overview of food safety practices, based on GAP/GHP, which can be taken to reduce the risks of produce contamination in school gardens. Additional resources are also provided throughout the document to help you and your students be successful at growing and harvesting safe produce.

This document was created and compiled by the Nevada Department of Agriculture and Nevada Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition and School Health. With input from the Nevada State Health Division, University of Nevada

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